

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT:

The Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians.

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EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Annual Meeting was held at Birmingham on Wednesday, June 13th. The glorious weather, combined with the splendid hospitality of the Midland Division made the occasion, for the 170 who attended it, extremely enjoyable and memorable. The arrangements for the day (which included a visit to the famous Reference Library, dinner at the most courteous invitation of the Midland Division, an excursion to the Lickey Hills and tea) were carried through with admirable efficiency by those responsible for them. Mr. Cashmore and Messrs. Chubb, Woodbine, Patrick and Woods, together with many members of the Birmingham Staff spared no effort to make the day memorable, and they were completely successful. On the glories of the books in the Birmingham Reference Library we could write reams. Shakespeare folios, quartos and facsimiles, first editions of noble books like North's "Plutarch," mediæval MSS., illuminated missals, etc., indubitably make this Library the British Museum of the Midlands. The meeting was an excellent means of meeting members who to many of us are but names, and those who could have attended and did not, missed one of the most enjoyable days in the history of the Association. The visitors included Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Cooper, Mr. H. D. Roberts and Mr. Male, of the Brighton Libraries staff. The latter was sent as an official delegate by the Brighton Libraries Committee to welcome Mr. Webb to his forthcoming year of presidency. At the Annual Meeting

the result of the ballot for Council and Officers was declared as follows :—

President—Mr. A. Webb, Brighton.
 Vice-President—Mr. R. Cooper, Battersea.
 Honorary Editor—Mr. F. Seymour Smith, Bethnal Green.
 Honorary Treasurer—Mr. F. E. Sandry, West Ham.
 Honorary Secretary—Mr. Gurner P. Jones, B.A., Stepney.

COUNCIL.

Divisional Representatives.

Eastern Counties—Mr. G. Hayward, Norwich.
 Midland—Mr. V. Woods, Birmingham.
 North-Eastern—Mr. W. E. Hurford, Newcastle.
 North-Western—Miss D. McLardy, Manchester.
 South-Eastern—Miss E. Gerard, Worthing.
 South-Western—Mr. F. J. Cooper, Portsmouth.
 Yorkshire—Mr. F. Haigh, Halifax.

LONDON : Vale, G. F., Bethnal Green, 276; Smith, R. D. Hilton, Croydon, 257; Rees, Miss G., Fulham, 252; Hunt, K. G., B.A., Tottenham, 248; Exley, Miss E., St. Marylebone, 240; Bussey, F. T., Hackney, 228; Snaith, S., Islington, 210; O'Leary, J. G., Bethnal Green, 202; Austing, A. T., Ilford, 184; Appleby, Miss P., Richmond, 166. *Not elected* : Summerfield, J. B., Richmond, 127; White, A. G., West Ham, 126; Gray, H., Stepney, 119; Martin, S. W., Lambeth, 118; Hounscome, J., West Ham, 64.

NON-LONDON : Chubb, L., Birmingham, 279; Cashmore, H., Birmingham, 276; Briggs, I., Newcastle, 254; Muskett, T. W., Huddersfield, 223; Richards, F. A., Darlington, 200. *Not elected* : Howarth, R., Warrington, 181.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe, the eminent poet, will address the A.A.L. on October 10th. Further particulars of this Inaugural Meeting will be published later.

Recommended Books, with this issue, is ceasing to exist as a monthly feature. The May Council Meeting decided that a monthly literary causerie would be more suitable. Contributions to this page are invited. They should be not more than 500 words in length and should deal with the writer's personal reaction to any book which he may have read and remembered. As high a standard as possible will be maintained. A word of appreciation and thanks is here due to Mr. G. E. Haslam for the manner in which he has, during the past year, fulfilled his monthly task of compiling "Recommended Books." We are indebted to him for introducing us to some

books which were unknown to us, and we are quite sure that many will regret the discontinuance of this feature because of this fact alone.

The Revision Course of the A.A.L. Correspondence Classes will be available to all those who apply to Miss E. M. Exley, St. Marylebone Central Library, London, W., by August 23rd.

Sequel Stories is now in the printers' hands, and will be ready shortly.

Tristram's Tomb, and other poems by Mr. James Ormerod, Sub-Librarian of the Central Library, Derby, will shortly be issued by Messrs. Elkin Matthews and Marrot.

The Central Library for Students has recently increased its list of Outlier Libraries by the action of the Lancaster Committee in allowing the special collection of books, pamphlets, etc., relating to North Lancashire and the Lake District, being made available to borrowers through the Central Library. The collection numbers over 3000 items, and Mr. Bland, the Chief Librarian, may subsequently be able to furnish duplicate entries for the Union Catalogue.

University of London, School of Librarianship.—There will be about fifteen vacancies at the end of the current Session in the 25 Free Places that have been provided under the arrangement with the London County Council, who made a grant for this purpose for the triennium 1926-29.

Chief Librarians are invited to draw the attention of suitable members of their staffs to the facilities thus open to workers in libraries in the County of London who wish to improve their qualifications. Some 30 assistants have already availed themselves of this opportunity, and have profited materially by the courses provided. Candidates should have attained such a standard of education as to be able to benefit by the courses; and those who wish to work for the Diploma should at least have matriculated, and possess a good working knowledge of Latin, and one modern foreign language.

Forms of application can be obtained from the Director, School of Librarianship, University College, Gower Street, W.C.

Mr. Frank Pacy.—As we go to press we have heard of the sudden death of Mr. Frank Pacy, O.B.E., the Hon. Secretary of the Library Association. The thought that his familiar figure will now no longer be seen at future Library Meetings and Conferences will come as a great shock to his large circle of professional friends.

THE DIVISIONS.

SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION.

The next meeting will be held at Bournemouth on 4th July. Members are asked to congregate at the Central Library, at 2.30 p.m. Although bathing tents and cricket gear will be provided on the sands, members are free to follow their own inclinations until tea-time (5 o'clock, Overstrand Cafe, Pier Approach, Boscombe).

6 o'clock.—Committee meeting at one of the libraries, after which the Secretary will give his impressions of the Birmingham Meeting.

MIDLAND DIVISION.

The seventh meeting of the session was held at Coventry on Wednesday, May 23rd, 1928.

Assembling at Coventry at 2.30 p.m., we proceeded to the City Guild Museum, where we were very kindly shewn round by Miss Angela Brazil, who related to us the story of the birth and growth of the Museum.

Afterwards, we formed parties to visit St. Mary's Guild House and the Cathedral.

Tea was provided by local hospitality at the Geisha Cafe, after which a visit was paid to the Gulson (Central) Library, where the evening meeting was held.

When formal business had been transacted, Mr. Charles Nowell, F.L.A., City Librarian of Coventry, addressed the meeting on "The Provision of commercial and technical literature in the smaller public libraries."

Mr. Nowell pointed out that commercial and technical sections in most public libraries were deplorably weak. This was mainly due to the inadequate book fund, within the limits of which it was well nigh impossible to keep these sections efficient and up-to-date. Nevertheless, committees and officials were not altogether blameless in allowing these sections to become in general, the weakest parts of the stock.

The old attitude towards the dissemination of commercial and technical information had changed, and in engineering to-day, some of the best men in the industry were writing both popular and highly technical books and articles giving full details of modern practice.

There was no limit to the work which the progressive public library could do to stimulate the flow outwards of information, which would assist local industry. Of hardly a volume in the Coventry Public Libraries could it be said, "That book must never leave the building."

In the course of the discussion which followed, Mr. Councillor R. J. Thomson (who is a member of the Library Committee) expressed his opinion as a layman, that libraries should have classification systems which could be more easily understood by the man in the street.

Votes of thanks to Mr. Nowell for his paper, to Miss Angela Brazil and the Library Committee for their kindness and hospitality, brought to an end a very successful meeting.

The issue of a special edition of the ASLIB DIRECTORY in a cheaper binding is under consideration. It will be available only to students in Great Britain and Ireland attending a recognised Library school or taking a recognised correspondence course. The price of this special edition will be 10/6 net (published price 21/-). It will be necessary for students to produce definite proof either in the form of a certificate or of a letter countersigned by their lecturer that they come within the above definition.

Students wishing to take advantage of this offer should communicate, before August 1st, 1928, with the General Secretary, The Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureau, 26, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY FOR STUDENTS held their Annual Dinner on Wednesday, May 16th, at University College. The occasion was a most important and enjoyable one since it gave the friends of this great institution an opportunity of meeting and talking over that most magic of tongue-looseners—the dinner table. Sir Frederick Kenyon, Principal Librarian of the British Museum, was in the chair and the list of many distinguished guests included Lord and Lady Elgin, Lady Mabel Smith, Sir Henry Miers, Dr. Mansbridge, Dr. R. B. McKerrow, Lt.-Col. J. M. Mitchell, and Mr. F. Pacy.

Dr. E. E. Lowe, Director to the Leicester Art Gallery, Museum and Public Library, proposed the toast to the Guests, replied to by Sir Henry Miers.

Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers then proposed a toast to the Central Library for Students, replied to by the Earl of Elgin, the President of the Library Association. Lord Eustace Percy, the President to the Board of Education, had consented to reply to the toast proposed by Dr. E. E. Lowe, but he was unfortunately detained at the House of Commons. Those present were therefore deprived of the pleasure of hearing Lord Percy make more or less definite statements about the State grant to the Central Library. It appears, however, that during the debate in the House on the Board of Education estimates the point was raised. The Duchess of Atholl, in replying, made the important statement that "the question of the permanent constitution of the Central Library should first be settled before the question of a grant is considered. In these circumstances the Government propose to ask the Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries to consider the problems of the Library in relation to the position of the British Museum Library, and I hope, at the same time, that the Central Library itself will work out its own proposals. When the question of the permanent constitution of a Central Library has been settled, the Government will be prepared to consider whether an interim non-recurrent grant is required for the purpose of tiding over the Library until new arrangements for its maintenance are completed."

The problem is thus held in abeyance again. By courteous invitation, the Association of Assistant Librarians was represented at the dinner by its President, Mr. G. F. Vale, its Secretary, Mr. G. P. Jones, and by Mr. F. Seymour Smith.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Delivered by Mr. ARTHUR WEBB (Reference Librarian, Brighton), at Birmingham Town Hall, June 13th, 1928.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with much trepidation, tempered with a great sense of appreciation at the honour you have bestowed upon me, that I venture to accept the office of President of this Association for the forthcoming year. When I recall those distinguished gentlemen and the one lady who have preceded me

in that office I realise that my task will not be an easy one. Such, however, is the good comradeship animating you that I take courage in the certainty that you will accord me that indulgence and that confidence without which no officer of any association adequately can fulfil the duties attaching to his position. I sincerely hope that at the end of my year of office, when I hand over the reins to another, that, notwithstanding my shortcomings, you will be satisfied that the Association has gained in strength, in status and in dignity.

It is, perhaps, appropriate that I should assume the Presidency just now, seeing that on Saturday last I completed a quarter of a century's service in the profession, while my membership of this Association dates from December, 1906, a period of over twenty-one years. I well remember attending some of the London meetings twenty years ago and listening to, and watching with awe, our Presidents and leading members of those days, little thinking that one day I should be holding the highest office it is possible for a librarian who is not a "chief" to occupy in this country.

When, a little over twelve months ago, I received the invitation to become your Vice-President, which office carries with it the reversion of the Presidency, I wrote to our esteemed Hon. Secretary telling him that that invitation was one of the greatest surprises of my life. I have recovered from that surprise, but I am, and always shall be, deeply conscious of the honour you have done me. May I be worthy of it, of the Association and of you. You will find that I am not an orator of wide vision, a master of tactful phraseology, a deep thinker or a verbal architect. I think, however, that I may fairly claim to be a keen observer of affairs generally, with a profound belief in the advantages to be gained by men and women engaged in work of a similar nature, co-operating and sharing their views, assisting each other in matters professional, social and educational, and in so doing creating a good influence which will affect not only themselves but also their calling.

The founders of our organisation set high ideals before them, and although the road towards the realisation of those ideals has been, and still is, somewhat rough and stony, we may claim that the Association has justified its existence. We have not accomplished all our founders set out to do—but, then, what Association has completely fulfilled the aims, hopes and desires of its pioneer workers? But we are still going forward—we are not looking towards a setting sun. Our optimism will increase from a review of the road along which

we have travelled. Let us remember that association is the means not the end. The work of an Association like unto ours is never done—our goal is a moving one. There is as much need to-day for a strong, energetic, well-directed body as there was twenty-five years ago, and I doubt not that the need will be just as great twenty-five years from now. Before then some of us will have "passed on," just as some of our predecessors have done—but others will take our places, and just as we appreciate the difficulties our forerunners had to face and overcome so may our successors appreciate ours and judge us not too harshly.

In the early days of its history this Association was viewed with suspicion by many "chiefs," and, I am afraid, encountered direct opposition in some quarters. I am not overlooking the sympathy and help given by some prominent librarians, not least of whom was my present chief, Mr. Henry D. Roberts, who has, throughout all these years, remained a true friend of the Association, and who, I am proud to say, has done me the signal honour of coming here this afternoon to witness the installation of a member of his staff as the President of an Association whose early efforts he did so much to encourage and aid.

The work of our pioneers gradually wore down the suspicion to which I have referred. Library committees and chief librarians began to realise that assistants were really out to improve themselves, and in doing that to improve the library service, so that to-day we find our Association is welcomed wherever it goes. The demand for assistant librarians of a definitely higher standard that that hitherto obtaining has developed immensely during the last twenty years. Public opinion now accords the library service a truer understanding of its place in the educational and recreational life of the country. May we not claim that our Association sensed the drift of things—nay, helped to mould the line of thought? During the last quarter of a century library methods have become crystallised. Matters like indicators versus open access and cards versus ledger charging have passed from the debate stage; subjects over which we young men (there were very few lady members in those days) used to keep discussion going at the meetings and then engage in verbal fights of our own long after the official proceedings had terminated. By these discussions we helped to pave the way for the general adoption of up-to-date, simpler and more economical methods.

It is not my intention to review the history of the Association or the present position of the library profession. One

reason is that the time at my disposal to-day is limited, another is that others are better qualified to review both matters, and the third reason is that, in common with other visitors, I am anxious to see a little more of this wonderful city of Birmingham and its vicinity.

I may, however, be permitted to remind you that our first annual report (1896) recorded a membership of 59. By 1903 this number had increased to 245, in 1913 it was 492, in 1923 there were 664 members, while to-day we rejoice in a membership of 1020.

In 1903 there were only 19 women members, in 1913 there were 135, in 1923, 330, and to-day there are 562, or 55 per cent. of our membership. It will be seen that during a period of 32 years the Association has, by slow degrees, increased its membership to its present total. It is true that real progress suggests a steady, orthodox advance—and we have seen that progress, but I am not satisfied that a membership of just over one thousand represents anything like the number of assistants who should be with us. I am not even satisfied that our membership represents the cream of assistant librarians throughout the country. Why are these others not with us? Personally, I consider the chief cause to be that worst of all diseases—*apathy*. If a man says "Your objects are all wrong—your methods are out-of-date," there is a concrete something upon which he may be argued with, but nothing short of an earthquake will wake some people from their sleep of apathy. Apathy, however, is not confined to non-members. Some of our members show signs of being afflicted with the disease. I suggest that the best cure is to create a new and lively interest in the Association in the minds of these members. Give them something to do; let them see that there is plenty of scope for work in the Divisions; work, the performance of which means advantage not only to the members generally and to the service, but to the worker, inasmuch as he has the satisfaction of knowing that he is doing something to help things along. I sometimes think that the younger members do not get a big enough show in the direction of our organisation. Although we must have at the head of affairs, especially on the Council, men and women of proved ability, experience and knowledge, there are many opportunities in the Divisions for the younger members, and I appeal to the older men and women not to hold to office after they feel that their period of usefulness has passed, but to make room for those younger members with whom the future of the Association so largely rests. The real strength of the Association

lies in the Divisions which are an integral part of its economy. The greater the number of members who can be actively interested in the work as office bearers, as members of committees, as contributors of papers, or as speakers in debate, the less chance has apathy to take root and flourish. The Divisions may be likened to the branches of a tree—the stronger the branches, the stronger the tree.

It has been suggested to me more than once that our Association is not doing enough in regard to conditions of service—in other words, there is not enough trades unionism in our methods. In this connection I proclaim most emphatically that the Association is *not* a trade union. We shall always keep a watchful eye on service conditions, co-operate with other organisations for the improvement thereof, give of our special knowledge and experience where desirable or when asked for, make representations where thought advisable. There is in existence a very fine organisation which, among other activities, most successfully looks after the service conditions of all local government officers, an association that is recognised by the government and local authorities as the mouthpiece of the municipal service in Great Britain (with the exception, I must add, of this city, the officers of which have their own Guild). All library assistants should belong to the Association to which I refer or some similar organisation, but so far as the A.A.L. is concerned, I repeat, *it is not a trade union.*

Presidential addresses usually include an attempt to outline future developments, and it may be that you will expect me to say something about the possible effects on library practice in this country of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Public Libraries, whose Report has been issued since our last Annual Meeting. I must, however, crave your forgiveness if I deal with the recommendations in a very summary fashion. My reason for so doing is because I feel that practically everything that can be said about the Report with advantage has already been said, and I do not desire to weary you with mere reiteration. Those who hoped or feared a Report containing extreme or revolutionary recommendations have been disappointed or relieved, according to their views. The Report, however, marks a decided advance. The Library Association, at the Edinburgh Conference last year, endorsed the Committee's proposals, and in accepting the grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees undertook "to carry into effect as soon as possible the relevant recommendations."

The development of Public Libraries in this country cannot fail to be influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the Report, and the future status of librarianship will depend, in some degree upon the measure in which the proposals are put into practice.

The Report is not a document that drives us into ecstasies of delight or paroxysms of despair, but it does calmly survey the present position and makes definite proposals for a great organised national library service, and although individuals may disagree upon details, the general principles command almost unqualified support. It is to be hoped that steps will be taken by the Government and the Library Association to translate these "principles" into "practice." So far, the Government has shown no undue haste to adopt the recommendation that a grant of £5,000 per annum should be made "in order to establish the existing Central Library for Students on a sound basis as a national institution, and to provide for the extension of its work which is immediately necessary." I suggest that this proposal is one of the most important made by the Departmental Committee and one which, if adopted, would have immediate and far-reaching effect on the library service of the country. I suggest that the Carnegie Trustees, with the Library Association and kindred organisations, should concentrate on obtaining from the Government the relatively small grant proposed. Speaking of the Central Library for Students reminds me that it has often occurred to me that the payment of postage on books borrowed from the Central Library must constitute a hardship on many poor students. Would it not be possible for the Government to allow books to be transmitted from and to the Central Library at a reduced rate, on much the same plan as books for the blind may be sent through the post—up to 6½ lbs. for 1½d.?

A short reference to paragraph 269 of the Report. In this paragraph the Committee state that "the securing of a good field of candidates would be greatly facilitated if all authorities would report their needs for higher grade appointments to a central bureau, which could be maintained by the Library Association. The existence of such a bureau of employment would be a long step towards the conversion of the library service from the condition of haphazard engagements, which now exists, to the status of an organised profession." Curiously enough, in all the articles on the Report I have read, I do not recollect seeing this view of the Committee challenged. To my mind, the institution of a "Bureau of Employment" is fraught with grave danger. Who is to decide to which part

of the register of those desiring a change any particular individual is to be allocated? Who is to make the selection of suitable men and women for a particular appointment when a local authority makes application to the central bureau? And how would the existence of the suggested "Bureau of Employment" do away with "haphazard engagements" or tend to convert the library service "to the status of an organised profession?" Town Clerks, Medical Officers of Health, Borough Engineers and Surveyors belong to recognised organised professions, but I have yet to learn that the Law Society, the British Medical Association or the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers have established Bureaus of Employment. I call for absolute open competition for all appointments—many of us know of, and have suffered through appointments being "cut and dried," of being filled before the final selection of candidates is made, sometimes even before the advertisement appears. It is a pity the Report does not develop the idea more fully to show exactly what was in the minds of the Committee.

I now come to the last matter with which I propose to deal, one which has an important bearing on the future of this Association. I mean the proposal put forward by the Earl of Elgin in his Presidential address to the Library Association last year for "one united professional body, including within its membership all librarians, whether chiefs of public libraries or university libraries, 'special' librarians, or assistant librarians." I would remind you too, that one of the conditions attached to the Carnegie grant to the Library Association was that "the Association undertake in due course to make a considered effort to induce the other library groups and associations to come within a single unit."

You will all have read the correspondence on the subject that has recently appeared in our journal, and I know that the matter has been discussed in its various bearings in at least one Division of our Association. The Association and the profession are indebted to Messrs. Savage and Sanderson for their contributions to this question. Both are in favour of an amalgamation of all library societies, as our own Hon. Secretary puts it, in "one large, strong, powerful, virile association," but whereas Mr. Savage advises progress to the goal of the one society through the first phase of federation, Mr. Sanderson plumps for complete amalgamation right away.

Both these gentlemen are entitled to be heard with respect, and their views examined carefully. I imagine there is nobody in my audience who will dissent from the view that

the *ideal* is one association combining in its membership all those engaged in every branch of library work, whatever their standing. It is generally conceded that the Library Association needs revivifying. I find that of 617 personal members of that Association with voting powers, 165 are assistant librarians, many of whom are also members of our own organisation. There is no doubt that with a new constitution, the services of its recently-appointed Secretary, and the accession of strength which we, in common with the other library societies, could bring to its ranks, a really powerful and influential association could be brought into existence.

This question of affiliation to the Library Association is not a new one. So far back as 1906 the parent association made definite proposals to this and other library societies. A special general meeting of your association was held and the proposals rejected. I am perfectly sure that if similar suggestions were made to us to-day we should refuse them in no uncertain manner.

I want to make it quite clear that, although the remarks I make on this question to-day are substantially the same as I voiced at the last meeting of your Council, when I was invited to state my views, and although those views then received general approbation, I am not submitting them to you as representing the considered opinions of the Councils, but purely as my own personal impressions.

In the first place I desire to state that the A.A.L. long ago survived the struggle for existence, is now a strong and lively body, and does not stand *in need of* adoption or absorption by the Library Association or any other organisation. This, however, will not prevent us considering any and all proposals placed before us; and we ought to accept any invitation to co-operate with any joint committee appointed to explore the possibilities of amalgamation or union, federation or affiliation. It is my opinion that in this matter we must "make haste slowly." This is all the more necessary when we reflect that our Council, as well as the general body of members, are divided, not only on the question of the desirability of complete union of this Association with the Library Association or a new society combining all the present and kindred associations, but also on federation or affiliation. In this connection we may remember that the Library Association is now revising its constitution, and I say unhesitatingly that that constitution will have to be revised in no mean manner before we could accept it as part of the price of losing our independence. Very definite advantages must be assured to our members

before we could agree either to amalgamation or federation. The matter of subscriptions, although an important one, is one matter only.

In not knowing what the proposed new constitution contains I am speaking at a disadvantage, but it occurs to me that if the Library Association contemplates carrying out its undertaking to the Carnegie Trustees, it would be better to postpone the revision of its constitution until it is seen what measure of progress towards amalgamation is possible, and what form of constitution would be acceptable to us and the other library societies. This, however, is a matter of domestic economy with which we, as an Association, have no right or desire to interfere, and I only mention it as a warning that it is quite possible that the new constitution may contain articles which would make it impossible for us to consider any form of union with the parent association.

It is probable that in a comparatively short time your Council will be consulting with the Library Association as to its intentions in the matters of amalgamation and affiliation. I appeal to you to have full confidence in your Council. I assure you we shall not be stampeded into a betrayal of your interests. The problem bristles with difficulties; it must be approached and dealt with in a statesmanlike manner, and will need very careful and delicate handling, but we shall not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. I would say "Trust your Council," not forgetting that before any federation or amalgamation can take effect the approval of our members is necessary.

I have purposely refrained from going into details, and will end my comment on this question with the statement that, personally, I am in favour of the amalgamation of all library societies, *when the time is opportune*. I am convinced that that time has not yet arrived. In the meantime I support a system of federation or affiliation with the Library Association, provided the interests of our Association and members are properly safeguarded.

And now I come to my final word. The Book of Proverbs says, "Where there is no vision the people perish." I have always thought that the most successful county librarians must be those who are imbued with the missionary spirit, men and women of vision. I ask you all to visualise the future of the library service. Let us, in the words of the Prince of Wales, "learn to adopt, to adapt, and to improve"; let us ruthlessly cut out any dead wood that makes its appearance. Always remember that we are engaged in a great public ser-

vice—a service vitally connected with the moral and intellectual welfare of the people; remember, that because reading is one of the most powerful factors in the moulding of the mind, a tremendous responsibility is vested in those who supply that reading. As the library service develops, as surely it must, so its cost in pounds, shillings and pence will increase; not only will the cost increase, but the greater will be the demands made on librarians of all grades. Let us see to it that our enthusiasm and efficiency keep abreast of all advances. Efficiency cannot be bought cheaply. Steady, long-sustained effort is the desideratum in all achievement. Remember, there can be no standing still, there must be progression or retrogression. Let us look beyond the narrow limit of our own profit—important as that is to us all—let us develop the ideal of service. We must realise that we are living in the present, face to face with the problems of to-morrow. It has been said of a great Englishman, recently deceased, that “he looked always to the past, often to the present, seldom to the future.” Whether or not Lord Oxford deserved this epitaph is not my concern to-day, but I hope it may not be applied to us. Instead, let us look often to the past, dipping deeply into the storehouse of experience, and in the light of the knowledge gained by the study of the years that are gone, build to-day, firmly and securely, for the future.

The past with triumphs, its failures, its discouragements, lies behind us; the future is before us. Let us learn from the past the mistakes to avoid, let its successes be the earnest of the things yet to be accomplished.

THE STATE OF THE LAW AFFECTING LIBRARIES AS AT PRESENT IN FORCE.

By ARTHUR R. HEWITT.

Assistant Librarian of the Hon. Society of the Middle Temple.

An Act to consolidate the law relating to Libraries in England and Wales is a long felt want, as at present, the legislation in force is scattered and difficult to locate. The following more important statutes relate entirely to Libraries:—Public Libraries Act, 1892 (55 & 56 Vict. c. 53); Public Libraries (Amendment) Act, 1893 (56 & 57 Vict. c. 11); Library Offences Act, 1898 (61 & 62 Vict. c. 53); Public Libraries Act, 1901 (1 Ed. vii. c. 19); Public Libraries Act, 1919 (9 & 10 Geo. v. c. 93).

There are several other statutes which, in some way, affect libraries generally. The first, "An Act for the better preservation of Parochial Libraries in that part of Great Britain called England" was passed in the year 1708 (7 Anne, c. 14). It is difficult to see what effect this Act was to have had except to provide local Clergy with facilities for study. However, it is still on the statute book, having not yet been repealed or amended. The several other acts noted in the chronological list below relate to local Government matters, making provision for byelaws, audit of accounts and finance, building, borrowing powers and adoption of Acts.

Rates and Income Tax as far as applicable to Libraries are dealt with in the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925 (15 & 16 Geo. v. c. 90 s. 2 (6) and the Income Tax Act, 1918 (8 & 9 Geo. v. c. 40 s. 37 sch. A vi. 1 (e) which provides that Libraries shall be exempt from the payment of Income Tax.

The law relating to malicious injury to library books and property is set out in an Act of 1861 (24 & 25 Vict. c. 97 s. 39), and the penalties to be imposed upon infected persons using library books are dealt with in the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907 (7 Ed. vii. c. 53 s. 59).

As regards the privileges of certain Universities and Libraries receiving copyright copies of books published, provision is made in the Copyright Acts of 1911 and 1915 (1 & 2 Geo. v. c. 46 ss. 15 (1)—(7), 29 (1) (iii), 32 (2), 33, 34; and 5 & 6 Geo. v. c. 38).

The Cotton collection was housed in the British Museum by Act of Parliament in 1700 and 1706 (12 & 13 W. iii. c. 7; and 6 Anne c. 30, or, in Ruffhead's edition of the Statutes, 5 Anne c. 30) and in 1866 provision was made that the Lambeth Palace Library should be maintained for the Public by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (29 & 30 Vict. c. 111, ss. 7 & 8).

There have been few Rules and Orders bearing on Library matters, of which the most important is the Ministry of Health (Public Libraries, Museums and Gymnasiums, Transfer of Powers) Order, 1920 (S.R.O., 1920, No. 810), wherein it was ordered that "on and after the 17th day of May, 1920, the powers and duties of the Ministry of Health specified in the schedule shall be transferred to the Board of Education." The powers contained in the said schedule are "to confirm, allow or disallow byelaws made by a library authority for certain purposes relating to libraries, museums, art schools and galleries" and "to sanction the sale or exchange of land vested in a library authority and to approve the application of the moneys arising from the sale or received by way of equality

of exchange, so far as such moneys are applied for library or educational purposes but not otherwise."

It will be seen from the following list that the number of statutes at present in force affecting libraries, render the administration of library law extremely difficult.

TABLE OF STATUTES,

Titles.	Year, Statute and Chapter.	How affecting Libraries.
Library in Cotton House.	1700, 12 & 13 W. iii. c. 7.	Cotton Collection.
Purchase of Cotton House, Westminster.	1706, 6 A. c. 30 ...	Cotton Collection.
Parochial Libraries Act	1708, 7 A. c. 14 ...	Parochial Libraries.
Malicious Injury to Property Act.	1861, 24 & 25 V. c. 97, s. 39.	Damage to books.
Ecclesiastical Commission Act.	1866, 29 & 30 V. c. 111, ss. 7 & 8.	Lambeth Palace Library.
Public Health Act ...	1875, 38 & 39, V. c. 55, ss. 182—6.	Byelaws, etc.
Local Government Act	1888, 51 & 52, V. c. 41, ss. 69 & 71.	Borrowing Powers, and audit of accounts.
Museums and Gymnasiums Act.	1891, 54 & 55 V. c. 22, ss. 4, 7 (2).	Maintenance and Byelaws.
Public Libraries Act...	1892, 55 & 56, V. c. 53	Consolidation of Library Law.
Public Libraries (Amendment) Act.	1893, 56 & 57, V. c. 11	Amendments.
Local Government Act	1894, 56 & 57 V. c. 73, ss. 7, 46, 48, 53.	Adoption of Acts; disqualification for council; elections.
Library Offences Act	1898, 61 & 62 V. c. 53	Offences in Libraries.
London Government Act.	1899, 62 & 63 V. c. 14, ss. 4, 8, 10, 34, 35 (2), sch. 3.	Transfer of power; committees; rates.
Public Libraries Act...	1901, 1 Ed. vii. c. 19	Amendments.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act.	1907, 7 Ed. vii. c. 53, s. 59.	Use of books by infected persons.
Copyright Act ...	1911, 1 & 2 Geo. v., c. 46, ss. 15 (1)—(7) 29 (1) (iii.), 32 (2), 33 & 34.	Delivery of books to British Museum and other libraries; compensation to certain libraries.
Copyright (British Museum) Act.	1915, 5 & 6 Geo. v., c. 38	Delivery of books to British Museum.
Income Tax Act ...	1918, 8 & 9 Geo. v., c. 40, s. 37, sch. A. vi., 1 (e).	Exemption from Income Tax.
Ministry of Health Act	1919, 9 & 10 Geo. v., c. 21, s. 3 (1) (a) (5), sch. 1.	Transfer of powers.

TABLE OF STATUTES—continued.

Titles.	Year, Statute and Chapter.	How affecting Libraries.
Public Libraries Act ...	1919, 9 & 10 Geo. v., c. 93.	Amendments.
Education Act ...	1921, 11 & 12 Geo. v., c. 51, ss. 3 (2), 73, 171 (1).	Transfer of schools, etc.
Rating and Valuation Act.	1925, 15 & 16 Geo. v., c. 90, s. 2 (6).	Expenses.

A CHOICE PROFESSION.

"Since girls first discovered that it could furnish them with pin-money while they waited for someone to love them, library work has been a prime favourite with the female of the species. It involves little labor, and that of a highly genteel character; it demands no great mental ability and it places the husband-hunter who enters it on public exhibition, where she can look over and be looked over by all the nubile males of the district under the most refined auspices."—FROM THE AMERICAN MERCURY, June, 1928.

DIARY OF A YOUNG FEMALE LIBRARY ASSISTANT WORKING AT THE X PUBLIC LIBRARY, for the dates July 10th-17th, 192—.

Tuesday.—Have definitely decided against the old gentleman from the Workhouse who fetches the unsold papers every morning. Feel that the "Married Quarters" of the Institution would not entirely suit my delicate constitution. Must look out for better things.

Wednesday.—Tony and Tommy came in. I gave them Edgar Wallace's latest which was reserved for old Mrs. —, and a Phillips Oppenheim. Have found out from Borrowers' Register that Tommy is only a commercial traveller.

Thursday.—Young Cocklethorpe took out a Student's ticket. I wish that intellectual people weren't so stand-offish. Still, I must admit, he became quite friendly after I'd let him suggest a few books.

Friday.—Bertie Evans asked me to reserve "The small bachelor." He looked so handsome as he leaned over the counter that I hadn't the heart to ask him for a penny for the postcard.

Saturday.—Bertie Evans in again to ask if "The small bachelor" had come in. Told him that ten people had

reserved it before he did but that it would help considerably if he inquired regularly.

Sunday.—No opportunities.

Monday.—Bertie Evans wanted to know if he should fill up another form because he had become a ratepayer now. Well staffed, so had an interesting conversation by the Biography.

Tuesday.—Have handed in my resignation. Am hiring the Lecture Hall for my wedding reception, and the staff are forming a triumphant arch of "Encyclopædia Britannicas."

Ipswich Public Libraries.

CONNIE DOWDY.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS.

(Books that should not be missed.)

Brown (Ivor). Parties of the play. (Benn, 8/6).

"Parties of the play is the last word about the theatre—and the best. It is the product of witty wisdom, rich experience and intelligence of the highest kind."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Coward (Noel). Three plays, with a preface: Home chat, Sirocco, and This was a man. (Secker, 7/6).

Owing to the activities of the censor, *This was a Man* cannot be seen on the stage. But it can be read, and it should be read.

Lewis (D. B. Wyndham). François Villon; a documental survey. (Peter Davies, 12/6).

"In this closely written, sharply imagined book, Mr. Lewis has accomplished the first adequate English study of the life and work of one of the greatest lyric poets of the world. It will be exceedingly difficult to excel his 'documental survey' of Villon."—SPECTATOR.

Littlejohns (J.). How to enjoy pictures. (Black, 6/-).

An excellent exposition of the art of the appreciation of art. No better prelude to a visit to any gallery exists. The illustrations, to each of which is appended an explanatory chapter, are carefully chosen, and well produced.

Pakington (Mary). The true likeness; a fantasy of the Middle Ages. (Benn, 5/-).

Venturi (Adolfo). Michaelangelo. Tr. Joan Redfern. (Warne 31/6).

Two hundred and ninety-six reproductions, excellent both in quality and arrangement, accompanied by an interesting and analytical, though short, account of Michaelangelo's life and work.

Williamson (James A.) Sir John Hawkins; the time and the man. (Clarendon Press, 20/-).

Hawkins, Drake, and their fellows have been, until recently, treated as something akin, if not to pirates, at least to privateers. Of their in-

valuable work as explorers, openers of trade routes, and pioneers of commercial expansion generally, little has been written. Mr. Williamson has given us not only a good biography, but also considerable insight into Tudor maritime policy.

G. E. H.

OUR LIBRARY.

A Report on the Public Museums of the British Isles (other than the National Museums), by Sir HENRY MIERS, F.R.S., D.Sc. Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. pp. 213. 8 plates. 11in. by 7½in.

This Report is the first to appear on the work of Museums as a factor in British education, and is issued in the hope that the recommendations embodied in it may suggest a way to a more satisfactory and constructive Museum policy. It is made clear, however, in a prefatory remark, that the Trustees, while greatly impressed by the value of the Report, have not yet arrived at any decision themselves, as regards a museum policy, and cannot entertain any applications for grants.

Sir Henry Miers, late Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, is responsible for the Report, the basis of which, in most cases, was a personal visit to the Museums themselves. The subject is dealt with very thoroughly, beginning with a brief historical and general survey which emphasises the haphazard manner in which museums generally have come into existence. The policy of indiscriminate acquisition upon which so many have been built up is criticised and condemned, and great stress is laid upon the present inadequacies of Museum staffs, and upon the importance of attracting a better type of trained Curator to the work. A policy of training on similar lines to that for Librarianship is suggested. It concludes with a number of suggestions and recommendations.

Museum policy along more definite and restricted lines is advocated, based on the maximum service likely to be rendered to a particular district. Also closer co-operation between national and provincial museums, neighbouring museums in an area, and museums and education authorities. Greater encouragement and better facilities to research workers is recommended. The author also suggests that specialised type of museums such as commercial and industrial museums should be instituted, also open-air folk museums, naval, agricultural, children's, and travelling museums. It is made clear that at the present time—desirable though it is—little financial help is to be expected of the government, and that future de-

velopment in museum service is likely to come only from rate-aided bodies.

To the Report itself, which occupies 81 pages, is added a very valuable statistical index.

A Report on American Museum Work, by E. E. LOWE, Ph.D., B.Sc. Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. pp. 50. 12 plates. 11in. by 7½in.

This Report on modern American Museum practice is issued as a companion to the Report on British Museums by Sir Henry Miers, and is the outcome of a two months visit paid to America by Dr. E. E. Lowe, of Leicester.

There are in America about a 1000 museums, the majority of which have been founded either by colleges and universities, or by societies or private persons, hardly ever have they been established by municipalities. Owing to the vast area covered, by endowment funds and other causes, the larger museums are wider in scope and more ambitious in aim than are British museums, and the buildings in which they are housed newer, larger, and better equipped.

Reading the two reports one is struck—as in the case of Libraries—by the impossibility of comparing British and American methods and policies.

Both Reports can be had free upon application to the Secretary, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Dunfermline.

E. G.

Jast (L. Stanley). *The Child as reader.* Libraco. (pp. 60).

Mr. Jast's book consists of two lectures delivered at the Bingley Training College, two papers on education and libraries, read before the Library Association, and an essay on "Bloods." The book makes exhilarating and persuasive reading. Its value lies not so much in its constructive proposals, as in its vivid insight into the child mind. To Mr. Jast children are really children, and he makes an eloquent plea for an attitude of sympathetic understanding in our dealings with them. Almost uniquely, he steers a safe course between the somewhat priggish attitude of the librarian who would deny children everything crude and "unliterary," and the equally deplorable indifference to which some of us are led by sheer despair. Children, as Mr. Jast shows, are the most elusive and perplexing of our readers; the problem of how to induce them to read good books seems almost insoluble. But one thing at least is obvious; our methods must be different from

those of the school. We are grateful to Mr. Jast for stressing this point; and no less for urging the need of allowing children all the freedom we can give. The boy who prefers the falstaffian exploits of William George Bunter to the soliloquies of Hamlet is obeying a healthy instinct, and the sooner we realise this the better. If he has any æsthetic appetite at all, the proximity of good books will be sufficient to make a reader of him. If, like most of his elders, he is incapable of such an appetite, the literary glaxo provided by "John o' London's Weekly" and library talks will be profitless. Mr. Jast does not burn his boats so thoroughly as this; but to such conclusions his thesis inevitably points.

In his desire to avoid wrongheaded or *a priori* conclusions, Mr. Jast tends to leave his argument hanging in air. For instance, on such a subject as "bloods" one expects, from his pen, something illuminating or at least trenchant. Actually the essay is somewhat pointless, for we are not told what these dreadful bloods are. Is the term intended to cover such a paper as the "Magnet?" I assume so; for this is the most popular of all boys' papers. It is popular, not, as Mr. Jast would claim, because it is cheap, ill-printed and pocketable, but because its stories are well planned, charmingly written, and healthy in tone. They are better school stories than public libraries can offer. Such facts as these we cannot afford to despise. Mr. Jast, perhaps, would ridicule such a suggestion. I mention this merely to indicate the kind of fallacy or prejudice to which librarians are all too prone.

In this small space it is hardly possible to do justice to a book of such quality; but it is a pleasure to be able to say that at last we have a book on the children's library which is neither intellectual sawdust nor sentimental gush. Unfortunately Mr. Jast's arguments are not improved by being execrably printed, and attired in a cover more appropriate to the catalogue of a chiropodist.

STANLEY SNAITH.

The ASLIB Directory, Edited by G. F. Barwick. O. U. P. 21/- net. (Buckram; pp. 425; 11½ by 7½ in.).

Long announced and eagerly awaited this indispensable work of reference has at last appeared. It is well printed, is strongly bound, and presents a comely appearance. Introductions are furnished by Sir F. G. Kenyon and Sir E. Rutherford, but most library workers will already be familiar with the design of the work. It is a guide to sources of specialised information in Great Britain and Ireland, and Mr. Barwick, the editor, has been at great pains to ensure accuracy and thoroughness.

The first part of the volume contains entries of special collections of books, arranged alphabetically by subject, giving a short description and the location. Then follows a section arranged under the names of the institutions, libraries, etc., where the collections are housed, giving times of opening and other useful particulars. Incidentally the volume forms an index to local collections.

The work has been well done, and but for a few minor inaccuracies and omissions seems to be remarkably complete for a first edition. Once again we must thank the Carnegie U.K. Trust for their generous grant enabling this work to be published. By the issue of the book alone, ASLIB has justified its existence. "The ASLIB Directory" should be in every Reference Library, and its issue is a matter for congratulation to all concerned.

The Carnegie U.K. Trust: 14th Annual Report. (Edinburgh; pp. 114; paper covers).

This survey of the activities of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust in the second year of the quinquennium 1926-30 reveals steady progress in all branches of their work. The Government Report, having been unanimously adopted at the Edinburgh Conference "must therefore be taken as representing the considered opinions of the profession, and as enunciating the principles which are likely to govern future developments." With this we must all agree, and not a few of us look to the newly-invigorated Library Association to bring its whole weight to bear on getting the Government to carry into effect their Committee's recommendations. The power and importance of the Carnegie Trust is enormous, and with their support a powerful Library Association must eventually convince even a Minister of Education and a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Paragraph 26 is full of interest, containing as it does, the particulars of the grant to the Library Association, which made possible the appointment of a paid Secretary and the acquisition of offices in Bedford Square. "It is remarkable," we read, "how much the Association has achieved through the ungrudging and able services of a long series of devoted volunteers."

Paragraph 28 states, *inter alia*, that "it remains now to effect some form of close co-operation with the Association of Assistant Librarians."

There are still a few building grants unclaimed, but the present policy of the Trustees is, of course, to make book grants rather than building grants. This appears to be a sound policy. The most important and interesting paragraph is undoubtedly that numbered 34. For here is given an account of a system of close co-operation between Borough, Urban and Rural Libraries operating successfully, if illegally, in Cornwall. A union catalogue of non-fiction books in the nine municipal libraries of that county is kept by the County Librarian. If a request is made at any of the libraries or to the County Librarian for a book which is not in stock at the place of enquiry, endeavour is made to supply the book from the Cornish libraries before applying to the Central Library for Students.

The report as a whole is full of interest to librarians and is well written. A feature of particular interest is the inclusion of the text of Lord Elgin's fine Conference speech: "A Jubilee: a Centre and a Free Swing."

The "Grasmere" Wordsworth; a redaction in one volume; Edited by John Hawke. (Simpkin, Marshall; 7/6 net; cloth; pp. 396).

This pleasant book is likely to be popular in all public libraries, and with all people who like their Wordsworth anthologised. Supreme poet as he undoubtedly was at times, Wordsworth turned out pages and pages of verse; not *mere* verse, but simply verse as opposed to poetry. Much of his work is dull and conventional and very few people can have read him with the completeness with which one reads, for example, Keats and Shelley. Of all the great poets, save Swinburne, Wordsworth can most bear anthologising without great vexation. We can recommend Mr. Hawke's admirable volume without reserve. Were we students of the "Prelude," we should probably quarrel with his selections from that work, but we are not, and the parts he quotes are so good that we may even be led to explore the whole poem in the hope of being able to criticise his selection. Mr. Hawke's occasional alterations and interpolations (demanded, he writes, by reason of the extracts being torn from their context) are carefully done, but are none the less to be deplored. The word of the poet is sacred; better an occasional obscurity than annoying change wrought by the hand of an editor, be he as sensitive as the artist himself. Students will find the "Grasmere" Wordsworth a boon when reading for examination, and we are sorry that the price is so much as 7/6. Compared with the complete Wordsworth published by the O. U. P. for 3/6 Mr. Hawke's book is dear.

Life and Letters: a monthly magazine. Edited by Desmond McCarthy. 1/- net.

We have awaited the appearance of this addition to the monthly literary magazines with some excitement, and after reading the first number from cover to cover, advertisements included, we can recommend it to all who care for literary journalism of the highest type. The first number contains an article on Lang, by Max Beerbohm, on the Science of Fiction, by Thomas Hardy, on Hamlet, by Santayana, and on Civilisation, by Clive Bell. All who read Mr. Clive Bell's illuminating book on art will enjoy his essay. Mr. MacCarthy himself writes on Emil Ludwig, and puts him in his place. Librarians who seek an excuse to add this Magazine to their already large list of periodicals will find more than adequate excuse in the most excellent "Readers' Reports" of new books, and in the special bibliographies which are to form a feature of the magazine. In format, *Life and Letters* compares favourably with most shilling magazines. By the excellence of his page in the *New Statesman*, "Affable Hawk" has for years quietly and indirectly been influencing the book selection of many public libraries, particularly in his treatment of good books which have slipped out of notice, and we think that *Life and Letters* will also be a particularly valuable magazine from a book selection point of view alone.

F. S. S.

SHORT NOTICES.

Reports, Catalogues, Bulletins, &c.

Bath Book Week Programme, May, 26—26th.

The excellent function has already received adequate attention from the local and daily Press. Including as it did, addresses by Sir Michael Sadleir, Michael Sadleir, Miss Rose Flyleman, Basil Blackwell, and

"George Birmingham," together with an essay competition for children, the whole affair was a model of its kind and is a matter for congratulation to Mr. R. D. M. Wright, the Director and Librarian, and his Committee.

Darwen Official Souvenir. By Joseph Pomfret, F.L.A., Borough Librarian and Curator.

A pleasant piece of publicity, running into over seventy illustrated and well-written pages.

Finsbury: Historical Notes on Prints, Maps, etc.

Published in connection with an exhibition held at the Town Hall. Mr. H. G. I. Cannons, the Borough Librarian, here displays his well-known capacity for bibliographical research in fiction by a list of no fewer than twenty novels, in which the Borough of Finsbury is represented. Granville Place, King's Cross Road, is here identified as Riceyman's Steps.

Halifax Readers' Guide, May, 1928.

Ipswich Public Library: A Year's Work, 1927-8.

Annual issue: 515,058; non-fiction percentage 41; Borrowers: 10,910 (6,031 of which have extra non-fiction tickets—this is remarkable); tickets in use: 17,104; Stock: 67,532.

Leeds Commercial and Technical Library: Bulletin.

This essay on the value of periodicals should be borrowed and studied by students. Its subject matter comes well within the scope of examination. The paper must be invaluable to the business men of Leeds.

Middlesex County Library. A catalogue of books on Economics and related subjects, and another on History.

These two catalogues are well produced and reveal the stock of the County Library at Hounslow to be very adequate and satisfactory in these two branches. The arrangement of the catalogue is not good. The books are catalogued by subject entry only, these entries then having been arranged in alphabetical order. There is no author index and the cross references are inadequate. *Divorce*, for instance, is not connected with *Marriage*; three volumes on *Smuggling* are effectually hidden under a sub-head of Crime, without any reference. The general air of unclassified and unscientific order about the whole arrangement spoils what would otherwise be an admirable list. It would surely have been much simpler and more useful to have arranged the entries in classified order and then to have given a subject index, which, for a collection of this size, would have run into five pages only.

Norwich Public Library: A Year's Work, 1927-8.

Adult and Juvenile Lending. Stock: 42,243; Issues: 351,104; Tickets: 14,344.

Oxford: Report for 1927-8.

Stock: 40,144; Issues: 354,734; Borrowers: 8,235. This report emphasises the forward policy of the Librarian and his Committee as exemplified by the recent re-organisation.

Walthamstow : Thirty-third Annual Report.

Borrowers : 20,952; Stock : 66,000; Issues : 580,000. The report from Walthamstow stands out from many by the lucid manner in which the statistics are presented, and in the excellent style in which it is written. Full use is made of the ammunition provided by the Government Report. The note entitled : "How Walthamstow compared with other library systems" is the best of its kind we have seen.

Waterloo-with-Seaforth : Report, 1927-8.

Issues : 127,550; Stock : 16,187; Borrowers : 4,686.

American Children's Libraries : a report to the Croydon Public Libraries Committee, by Ethel G. Hayler, Children's Librarian, Croydon.

Croydon must be commended for its vision in giving Miss Hayler the opportunity to enlarge her experience of Children's Libraries by granting her leave to travel in the U.S.A. and in Canada. The results of such a survey as she has been able to make will undoubtedly be beneficial not only to her own professional career, but to the Croydon Children's Department too. The American Children's Libraries, she reports, are magnificent; page boys are sometimes employed for shelving; no tickets are used; fairy tales are classed at 398.1, with folk-lore; each child is allowed two tickets, on each of which (during the summer) six books may be issued; picture collections are the rule; all the books for the children are read by the staff before being placed for issue; story hours are universal; many libraries have parents' rooms attached; many have room for toddlers, who read or tear scrap books while their parents or brothers and sisters choose their own books; etc., etc. The report is very business-like and will be of value to all interested in the subject.

Library Review : Summer Number, 1928.

Contents : The Public Library service of to-day, by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Elgin; The Threshold of Bookland, by E. Scouller; The County Library and the Miner, by B. Barton-Eckett; A Note on the C.L.S., by L. Newcombe. This magazine still maintains its distinctive note.

The Library Lions, May, 1928. (New York Public Library Staff Association).

Others besides ourselves will be very surprised to learn that the staff of one of the world's greatest libraries has no pension scheme. We wish our colleagues luck in their fight for this most obvious right.

Pittsburgh : Bulletin, May, 1928.

Grand Rapids Library : Bulletin.

American Library Association : Bulletin, June, 1928.

A large volume of 242 pages, containing the annual reports of each section of the A.L.A. Of great value for comparative examinations. Mr. Adam Strohm's contribution is noteworthy. He voices a truism in trenchant language : "The man who spends his time reading is rather common, the well-read man is all too rare, the critical attitude is absent. The utilitarian evaluation of the book is over-emphasised in library work and the ennobling literature is neglected."

More Books: The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library, April, 1928.

Contents: English tracts; Library Notes; Ten Books; A selected list of recent additions.

Brooklyn Public Library: 30th Annual Report.

Contains items of great interest. "The work of a library staff is measured, in terms of circulation, as 20,000 volumes for a year to one full-time worker." A "Duplicate Pay Collection" has been formed in some of the libraries and is working well. This means that duplicate titles of books in the general stock are kept and issued to those willing to pay 5 cents per issue. There were 75 resignations during the year.

F. W. Faxon Company's Bulletin of Bibliography.

Library Journal, May, 1928.

Contents: Libraries in Illinois; A Modern library in Stockholm, etc.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—It may be of interest to your readers to know that in "The American Mercury" for June, 1928, is an article by Mr. Fletcher Pratt entitled "A glance at the public libraries."

American methods in librarianship have for long been regarded as the "Beau ideal," so it is with surprise that one reads such statements as "... long discussions at librarians' meetings are given over to the great question of how to keep the public from reading what it likes and how to induce it to read the mouldering stacks of books it doesn't care about. It is not a question of literary excellence, for in these discussions the fiction of Joseph Conrad and the fiction of Harold Bell Wright get exactly the same treatment." Also, "Nothing is more curious to the outside observer than the typical librarians' (sic) preoccupation with the infinitely little." And, further on, we get "This tireless energy over trivialities argues that small minds are at work, and sure enough, there is a certain lack of intelligence among librarians."

The admission comes, however, that "Once in a while, even a public library gets a good man—one of those rare souls in whom a romantic devotion to literature or the public service is combined with administrative talent of a high order."

One cannot but feel that there is a good deal of truth contained in the article, which touches upon a number of other interesting topics besides the status and attainments of the genus librarian—the fiction percentage, new books, censorship, salaries, and the female assistant. The impression given is that the average public library is more trouble than it is worth, and there certainly must be something very wrong for such an influential journal as "The American Mercury" to give space in its columns to an article of this type. It is a dismal reflection, and one often overlooked, that others do not always see us as we see ourselves.

Without a doubt, however, there are many of your readers who could easily refute, from their own experience, many of the statements made, and others, I suspect, who will wonder what all the fuss is about.

I am, Dear Sir, Yours faithfully,

BENJAMIN C. JONES, Assistant-in-Charge

St. Pancras Public Library, Chester Road).

The Editor, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—“It was a poisonous book. For years Dorian Gray could not free himself from its influence.”

It is to be feared that Mr. Snaith's scintillating paper on “Censorship” will prove of little practical value to librarians in dealing with one of the most difficult problems they have to face. The crux of the problem is this, that adult lending libraries are open to everyone who has reached the age of 14, and that the influence of books on immature minds is incalculable for evil as well as for good. How then are we to provide that books suitable for adult minds only (Mr. Shaw does not object to his own being so regarded, see “The Daily News,” 15/11/26) are not borrowed by adolescents? Mr. Snaith apparently approves of keeping “certain books out of the reach of very young readers.” But it is not the very young reader who is the problem, it is not the boy of 7 who is likely to be harmed by unsuitable books, but the boy of 17. It is no compliment to the power of the written word to underestimate its influence on human behaviour.

It is within the last 50 years or so that the censorship of books as a general problem has become acute, with the advent of cheap editions, free libraries, and almost universal literacy. In spite of our alleged prudery Rabelais is far more accessible now than he was to his contemporaries, the great majority of whom could neither afford the price of books nor read them if obtained. Mr. Snaith exaggerates the activities of the censorship in this country. No doubt it was absurd to ban Mr. Shaw's “social tracts in dramatic form,” though it is possible that their morbid puritanism may be even more harmful than the evils they combat. But in book form they have never been banned, and it is in this form that they reach their widest public and are most successful. Very few books are banned officially in this country, and the only case mentioned by Mr. Snaith for which we must blush, the suppression of certain volumes by Mr. Havelock Ellis (intended for a very specialised public) concerns a work of scientific rather than of artistic merit.

The reason why librarians “have taken upon themselves to decide whether or not a book is fit to read” is not in the least obscure, for it is one of the first principles of book selection. And if the librarian fails to perceive at the first that “Frantic Grass” is pure gold and “Mazy Side-walks” base metal, is he so very culpable? Greater than he have been unsuccessful in distinguishing between pornography and fine literature, though, as the author of “Jurgen” insists, “there is a difference, if but the difference that everybody enjoys the first whereas few care one way or the other about the second.” Moreover, the principle that “no great or good books are harmful” is untenable, “Il Decamerone” is a perfect work of art and none the less effective as a corrupter of youthful morals. Nor is the reputability of an author any criterion, or we might allow an unrestricted circulation for “Les Contes Drolatiques.” “No one will deny that a wise discrimination is legitimate,” and what is this but personal censorship, for are not all our discriminations wise in our own eyes?

Mr. Snaith concluded his paper by mentioning four artists as examples of those who are the real influence on our lives. In a sudden excess of austerity his list was one-sided. Let us have also Michaelangelo, Boccaccio, and Wagner—“mais pas pour les jeunes filles.”

I am, yours faithfully,

FRANCIS S. ENGALL.

Charlton Branch Library,
Charlton House, S.E.7.

Mr. Snaith's reply will appear in the next issue.

POEMS FROM A PRIVATE ANTHOLOGY.

(II.)

INVOCATION OF SILENCE.

Still-born Silence! Thou that art
 Flood-gate of the deeper heart!
 Offspring of a heavenly kind.
 Frost o' th' mouth, and thaw o' th' mind.
 Secrecy's confidant and he
 Who makes religion mystery!
 Admiration's speaking'st tongue!
 Leave thy desert shades among
 Reverend hermits' hallowed cells,
 Where retired Devotion dwells!
 With thy enthusiasm come,
 Seize our tongues and strikes us dumb!
 (*Richard Flecknoe. fl. 1650.*)

APPOINTMENTS.

- SIDNEY, EDWARD, of the Leeds Reference Library, to be Chief Librarian, Leyton. Salary £450—£500. (Also selected: Messrs. K. G. Hunt, Tottenham; G. F. Vale, Bethnal Green; W. Hynes, Willesden; W. Smith, Bolton; and A. E. Sleight, Cardiff).
- BIGGS, J. H. E., M.L.A., of Cardiff Libraries, to be Librarian, Colne (Lancs.) Commencing salary £230 p.a. Six L.A. Certificates. (Also selected: Messrs. Foster, Bolton; Norman, Burnley; and Robertshaw, Bradford).
- WHITE, GEORGE, of Fulham Libraries, has been appointed to a position on the staff of Messrs. G. Blunt and Sons, Public Library Bookbinders, Harlesden, N.W.10.

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